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EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE COURSE IN HOSPITAL ECONOMICS

THE Committee on Hospital Economics have issued a circular in the form of a report of the course, which closes with an appeal to the public for an endowment of one hundred thousand dollars with an annual guarantee, meanwhile, of two thousand five hundred dollars for the next five years, or until the income from the endowment shall have reached that amount.

The circular includes extracts from a number of letters from the graduates of the course showing in what way it has been of especial value in the lines of work in which they are now engaged.

The Course in Hospital Economics has now been established for seven years, and during that time the funds necessary for its maintenance, over and above the tuition paid by the pupils, have been donated almost entirely by a small group of nurses who have year after year contributed from their own earnings the salary of the instructor and part of the expenses of the lectures.

During these seven years the feeling has prevailed that until nurses had demonstrated their ability to maintain this course, at least in part, the public should not be appealed to for assistance.

It would seem to have been demonstrated that the nursing profession is not only able but willing to bear part of the expense, and in view of the fact that the direct benefit of better teaching in the training-schools insures a higher grade of service to the hospitals, and more skilful care to the patients in their homes, it is only right that the public should share with the nursing profession in the maintenance of this important branch of nursing education.

Nurses as individuals and in nursing organizations are therefore urged to continue their contributions to this course, and at the same time to present its needs to such generous citizens in their community as may be interested either in hospital or educational affairs.

The training of better teachers for the ever-increasing multitude of training-schools is becoming more and more an important matter. Go into any city or town where there is such a school and where there are a number of nurses in private practice, and it will be found that just in proportion as the superintendent of the school is public-spirited and liberal, the same characteristics will predominate among the nurses. If the superintendent is content to devote her time exclusively to the work which is confined by the four walls of the hospital, giving no time or interest to public work, either of prevention or philanthropy, outside, and takes no interest in the other members of her profession, we may be quite sure of finding the nurses in private practice mercenary, narrow, selfish, and absolutely lacking, not only in interest in public affairs, but in knowledge of public affairs also. This applies in large cities as well as small.

The superintendents have been from the very beginning the leaders in our professional life; if their interest is not felt in the *alumnæ* association or local organization it is apt to be a somewhat lifeless society.

In all of the great questions in which nurses are coming into prominence in district and tuberculosis work and in legislative action, with few exceptions, we find the influence of the superintendent as the inspiring cause.

There are communities where the nurses are apparently dead to all sense of responsibility as members of a profession, and if we go back to the hospital we shall find the same indifference in the woman at its head.

Our hope for the future of a keener appreciation of the responsibilities which are crowding upon us, and which are a part of every profession, is in distributing over the country women in whom has been developed this sense of professional responsibility, and the Course in Hospital Economics at Teachers College is the main source of supply from which this great leavening body may be drawn.

TIME TO APPLY.

It is none too early for those who intend to enter the autumn class to make application. Letters of inquiry should be sent to Miss A. L. Alline, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, and any of the leading women of the Superintendents' Society can supply infor-

mation to those who desire a more personal knowledge of the course and its advantages than they may find in the prospectus. Miss Alline's report on another page gives valuable information to those wishing to apply early.

The time is coming when every woman who means to make a speciality of teaching nurses should feel obliged to prepare herself by taking this course.

THE HOSPITAL DEFICIT

AGAIN New York is agitated over the half-million-dollar deficit between the twenty larger hospitals of the city, and a meeting was held recently under the auspices of the Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor which resulted in the appointment of a committee of twelve, which is to make an exhaustive study of the condition and causes that have led to this financial crisis.

That there is great lack of uniformity in the methods of keeping hospital accounts was brought out at this meeting. Of sixty-one hospitals listed only three—St. Luke's, Presbyterian, and Roosevelt—were found to have anything like a complete, detailed classification of their expenses. In nearly all of the others it was found to be quite impossible to distinguish surgical supplies from provisions, fuel from light, repairs from construction, etc., etc., or whether per capita cost of food was for patients or included employés.

Our information, taken from *Charities*, seems to show that the trustees of the hospitals are inclined to look only to the question of raising more money. Dr. John Brennan, president of Bellevue and the Allied Hospitals, has again this year, as last, expressed the opinion that at least part of the deficit comes from waste, referring especially to extravagance in the use of surgical dressings by both physicians and nurses.

We are inclined to think that Dr. Brennan is in the main on the right track. Our great city hospitals are becoming each year more and more like superior hotels. The equipment is quite as costly of its kind, and every whim of a sick person is gratified almost regardless of cost. Service and food are the only two points where any degree of economy seems to be exercised. Instruments and apparatus, expensive medicines, and surgical supplies of every kind are ordered regardless of cost and at the request of every medical officer, and in the rush and pressure of the daily routine very little regard is paid to economy of usage. It is impossible to teach the nurses to practise economy unless the example of economy is set them by the attending staff.

We were visiting a new wing of one of the hospitals in question not many years ago, and, stopping to admire some very beautiful glass furnishings for a small operating-room, we asked where they were made and the cost. We were given the name of the firm, but the price was not known to the person who had given the order, who remarked that "the cost of such furnishings is never questioned in this hospital."

Possibly the great hospitals of New York need to look more closely into the strictly business methods of their administration. Careless ordering and waste can eat up a great many thousands of dollars in a year.

THE SANITARY SITUATION AT PANAMA

POSSIBLY all of our readers have not seen Dr. Charles A. L. Reed's report to Secretary Taft on the sanitary conditions at Panama, and as nurses are already there and are still likely to be called for, we give some space to the subject at this time.

Dr. Reed arrived at Colon on February 7 and spent fifteen days in careful investigation of existing conditions. He was given every facility for thorough inspection by the officers in charge, and his report shows conditions quite as bad as those existing in our Spanish War camps, arising from practically the same causes,—interference with the details of the sanitary department on the part of members of the commission, red-tape, and petty economy,—which prevented Colonel Gorgas, the sanitary officer, from carrying out the precautions necessary for the prevention of yellow-fever and malaria until after several deaths had occurred and much illness prevailed. We quote some passages from Dr. Reed's report, and advise all nurses who may contemplate service in Panama to familiarize themselves with the conditions which they may expect to meet, unless under the new commission appointed by President Roosevelt early in April very radical changes are brought about in the sanitary conditions of the canal zone. Only nurses should enroll for this service who are willing to risk their lives in the cause. Speaking of the red-tape which had so obstructed the work of the sanitary officers Dr. Reed says:

"It is interesting to inquire into the working of this wonderful mechanism. Thus, if Major La Garde, superintendent of Ancon Hospital, makes a requisition for supplies, he must make it in due form, take it for approval to the chief sanitary officer, then to the Governor of the zone, then to the chief disbursing officer; whence it goes to the commission at Washington; then to Mr. Grunsky as committeeman; then back to the commission; then, if allowed, bids are advertised for;

awards are made; the requisition is filled under the supervision of a purchasing agent notoriously ignorant of the character and quality of medical and surgical supplies; the material is shipped to the Isthmus, consigned to the chief of the Bureau of Materials and Supplies, who notifies the disbursing officer, who notifies Colonel Gorgas, who in turn notifies Major La Garde, who applies to the quartermaster,—the boss of a corral,—for transportation, and so much of the stuff as in the judgment of, first, the Governor, next the chief disbursing officer, next the commission, next, and more particularly, Mr. Grunsky, ought to be allowed to the superintendent of Ancon Hospital finally arrives or does not arrive at its destination. This is no fanciful picture; it is exemplified in practically every ordinary requisition that goes forward. And what is true of Ancon Hospital is true at Colon, at Culebra, at Miraflores, and at all points along the line that require supplies of this description. It is true that in the presence of emergency it is not necessary to send clear to Washington, and certain purchases are permitted and authorized in the open market at Panama, but always, of course, at greatly increased prices.

“An instance in point occurred a few days before my departure from Ancon: A woman in the insane department was delivered of a child; her condition was such that she could not nurse her offspring; the nurse applied to Major La Garde for a rubber nipple and a nursing-bottle; he had none—the requisition of last September had not yet been filled; he made out a requisition, took it to Colonel Gorgas for indorsement, then to Mr. Tobey, chief of the Bureau of Materials and Supplies, for another indorsement, then to a clerk to have it copied and engrossed; then a messenger was permitted to go to a drug-store and buy a nursing bottle and nipple, which finally reached the infant two days after the necessity for their use had arisen. The articles ought to have cost not more than thirty cents, but counting the money value of the time of the nurse, of Major La Garde, of his clerical help, of Colonel Gorgas, of Mr. Tobey, of Mr. Tobey’s clerks, of the messenger, the cost to the government of the United States was in the neighborhood of six dollars and seventy-five cents—all due to the penny-wise and pound-foolish policy of the commission, more especially of Mr. Grunsky.”

Of the medical service he has much to say, a part of which we quote, as follows:

“The commission in every effort that it has made to secure service of any character on the Isthmus has tacitly acknowledged the unhealthfulness of the region by holding out as an inducement the fact that employes will be furnished free medical treatment, including the service of the hospitals. The fact that medical men in the zone would have much executive work to do, that they would have to deal with large bodies of workmen, and that their duties would require the exercise of trained judgment in a very broad sense, prompted Colonel Gorgas to advise that only relatively mature men be brought to the Isthmus in the capacity of physicians. He advised, furthermore, that the minimum salary to be paid to medical men in the zone be the same as the minimum

salary paid in the army for contract surgeons—namely, eighteen hundred dollars. This plan did not, however, commend itself to the commission, more especially to Mr. Grunsky, who, in the interest of alleged economy, conceived the brilliant scheme of establishing internships in the hospital of the zone, the incumbents to receive fifty dollars per month, the same salary that is paid to nurses. The verbal justification of the plan offered by Mr. Grunsky, and subsequently adopted by the commission, is that young men will thereby receive a preliminary training in tropical diseases, which is to be accepted by them as part pay for their services, after which—that is, after a year, if they so desire—they will be at liberty to return to the States. But Mr. Grunsky takes pains not to say that the incidental service to be rendered by these internes is to represent the bone and sinew of the medical service on the Isthmus, and likewise fails to make clear how he expects to establish a stable medical service if, after the expiration of a year, his internes are at liberty to return to the North, which they would doubtless do in the absence of inducements to remain on the Isthmus. And what if they should desire to return before the end of a year?

“This question brings us face to face with Mr. Grunsky’s trap to get cheap medical service for the zone. Once on the Isthmus, these young men, finding themselves on the salaried basis of nurses with incidental expenses that cannot be evaded and that will eat up the last penny of their beggarly stipend, desiring to leave their humiliating positions, will find the door closed against egress. It is even to-day easy for an employé to get to the Isthmus, but it is already exceedingly difficult for him to get away from it. And what is true to-day will be more emphatically true in the future, a fact that the commission, more especially Mr. Grunsky, takes great care to leave in the background.”

Dr. Reed’s comments on the nursing department should be given careful consideration. He says:

“This report might be indefinitely amplified, but time will not permit. I feel it important, however, to allude to the fact that the policy which the commission, more especially Mr. Grunsky, has adopted with reference to furnishing cheap medical service to those who risk their lives in the zone has been adopted for the purpose of furnishing nurses for service in the sanitary department. The effort has been made under the subterfuge of establishing a training-school to be conducted at Ancon, to get nurses to go to the zone at about the same rate that is paid for pupil nurses in the training-schools of the United States. The same conditions, practically, are imposed on the nurses with reference to time service that is imposed on the internes, with the difference, however, that the period of enforced detention on the Isthmus under contract is placed at *three years instead of one*. This is not a place to take untrained nurses under any pretext, for nothing but fully developed talent in the various departments of activity should be sent to the Isthmus.”

There are no war conditions to be considered in the service at Panama, and nurses who enroll for this work should be carefully selected

and well paid. Fifty dollars per month seems a paltry sum when one thinks of the terrible risk to life which is involved. If the government cannot, or will not, control the sanitary situation, at least let the men and women who will risk their lives in this work be liberally paid.

THE EMPLOYMENT-AGENCY LAW

IN the January JOURNAL we commented upon the manner in which the New York employment-agency law was being interpreted to include registries for trained nurses. In its original form the bill was obnoxious to nurses, but as there was an element of uncertainty in regard to its intention and some law to regulate the management of employment agencies for domestic servants was very sorely needed, it was thought best to wait until another year before taking definite action to have trained nurses placed with teachers in the exempt class. Action has been precipitated, however, by the introduction into the House of amendments to the employment-agency act which, as a whole, weaken the law as originally framed by the Woman's Municipal League, and which, as shown in an extract from *Charities*, found on another page, is accomplishing much in the way of reform. These amendments plainly and clearly include nurses' agencies with those for domestic servants, vaudeville performers, and others who shall be required to conform to certain conditions.

We give in another column an account of a mass-meeting held in New York City to formulate plans to coöperate with the Woman's Municipal League for the defeat of these amendments, which gives the situation. Miss Damer, in her official position as president of the New York Nurses' Association, has called upon members throughout the State to give their political aid in this work, and every effort is being made to have registered nurses placed in the exempt class with school-teachers.

The unreasonableness and injustice, to say nothing of the insult, of classing nurses registered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York with emigrants, domestic servants, and vaudeville performers would hardly seem to need comment but for the fact that in the estimation of the men who are working to amend the employment-agency law they seem all to belong in one and the same class—another instance of the fact that neither women's clubs nor politicians can be trusted to deal intelligently or justly with nursing interests and standards, and that it is only through close and strong organization and loyalty that nurses may hope to obtain recognition of their proper professional position from the public at large.

Miss Damer and Miss Delano attended the hearing at Albany on April 11, and introduced amendments placing registered nurses in the exempt class, and these amendments were accepted by the committee. If the amended bill passes at all, the nurses' amendment will be adopted, so we are told, but if the bill is defeated, the situation will be as it was before and special amendments will have to be introduced another year. It is most true that our work is only beginning.

THE PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THE Pennsylvania bill for the State registration of nurses has been defeated through the influence of medical men who have private interests of a commercial character at stake.

The full report of the Pennsylvania campaign is found in the Official Department.

The Colorado bill for State registration of nurses has passed and is printed in the Official Department with an account of the political campaign, and the California bill will also be found in this issue. We reserve comment on these two bills until all the States have been heard from.

THE NEW YORK STATE MEETING

THE annual meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association held at Albany on April 18 was largely attended and was exceedingly harmonious in character. The secretary's report is found on another page.

An interesting feature of this meeting was the address given by Dr. Draper, the Commissioner of Education, whose subject was "The Education of Women." Dr. Draper spoke cordially and with great appreciation of the advance work upon educational lines being done by the New York State Nurses' Association, promising for himself and the officers of his department continued coöperation in the administration of the registration act upon such lines as the nursing fraternity of the State desire.

THE NEW ORGANIZATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

THE Massachusetts bill for State registration of nurses was withdrawn for the second time on March 21.

The meeting for the organization of the new society, to which reference has already been made in these pages, the inception of which came

from Dr. Worcester, of the Waltham Training-School, was held on March 31 at the Medical Library in Boston. The circular of the announcement of this meeting was a modification of the one which we previously printed in these pages, all suggestion of any system of registration being eliminated.

The names of a number of people conspicuous in educational and training-school work had been added to those already published, President Eliot, of Harvard College, heading the list, with Dr. Le Feavour, of Simmons College, Dr. Richard Cabot, Miss Linda Richards, Dr. Cowles, Dr. Tuttle, Dr. Howard, and Miss P. L. Dolliver among those best known to our readers.

There were two sessions, one in the afternoon the other in the evening, which were largely attended, and the meeting was carried on principally by a group of physicians.

There were in the audience a number of the officers and leaders in the movement for State registration, and several of them were called upon by the temporary chairman to express their views in favor or against the organization of this new society.

*Miss M. E. P. Davis and Miss M. M. Riddle spoke in opposition to such an organization, as being detrimental to the best professional progress of nurses. Miss P. L. Dolliver advocated the organization of such a society. Dr. Alfred Worcester occupied a seat in the rear of the hall, taking no part in the proceedings except to prompt the temporary chairman when he seemed to be getting off the track.

When the vote was taken for and against the organization of this society the great majority of those present did not vote, but the "ayes" had it, and the New England Society for the Education of the Nurse was organized, Dr. Richard Cabot, president, Dr. Grace Wolcott, treasurer, the secretary not being appointed, as the proper person for that office did not seem to be available at that time.

A committee of twenty was appointed to complete the organization of the society.

Forty-three nurses signed the membership roll, the majority being graduates of either the Waltham or Framingham Schools.

There was not a large representation of either hospital managers or physicians aside from the small group of people who had been instrumental in bringing about the formation of the society.

The object of this society, as we understand it, is to be purely educational.

Dr. Richard Cabot is well known to the nursing profession; he is a man who commands the respect of the great nursing body, although all of his ideas are not in accord with those which nurses have for their own

advancement. He claims to advocate State registration; he stands for the higher education of nurses; he disapproves, we are told, of using pupils in training as a means of revenue for the hospital, but he is a strong advocate of the Waltham method and he represents the influences which are believed to have defeated the Massachusetts bill for State registration. We know that some of our friends have joined this society because of their personal confidence in Dr. Cabot's loyalty to nursing interests.

There is a wonderful resemblance, from our point of view, between the organization of the New England Association for the Education of the Nurse and the early inception of the Royal British Nurses' Association. We cannot see the disastrous effect of the English organization upon the nursing interests in Great Britain and feel any degree of confidence in the results that may be looked for in the New England association, even under the leadership of Dr. Cabot, for whom we have profound respect. The defeat of the Massachusetts bill for State registration, which was a nurses' measure for nurses' advancement, came, at least to some extent, through the influence of the group of people who originated this new society. It cannot be called a nursing organization, nor can those who are leading it consistently profess to be in sympathy with State registration upon the lines desired by nurses, when they have been so recently instrumental in defeating the nurses' bill. It is the first organized opposition to the liberty of nurses that we have had in this country, and while we regret to differ from some of our friends who believe that great good can come from it, we adhere to the opinion that the best interests of the professional advancement of the great nursing body in New England cannot be developed from such a society. That there is need for improved methods of training no one denies, but we believe, in the light of the history of nursing, that nurses must work out these problems for themselves, with State registration the compelling force.

A CORRECTION

THE announcement was made in the April issue of the JOURNAL that the Governor of Maryland had appointed Miss Ross as the inspector of training-schools for the State. We were in error as to the source of Miss Ross's appointment. Miss Ross was not appointed by the Governor, but was requested by the Board of Nurse Examiners to visit the training-schools of the State and look into the methods in vogue, that the board might be better informed as to the character of the work being done in the schools.

Miss Ross was cordially received by the training-school authorities, and although her inspection was in a measure unofficial, the results were most satisfactory, as through her report the examiners have a clearer comprehension of the standards upon which they are to build.

We have been notified by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company that our figures quoted last month for the trip through the Yellowstone as thirty-five dollars were not correct, but that the amount is forty-nine dollars and fifty cents, which includes all expenses, railroad, stage, and hotels, from the time of leaving the main road at Livingston, through the Park, and return, for five and one-half days.

PAGES CLOSING EARLY

WE are closing our pages some days earlier than usual with the hope that the JOURNAL may be received before delegates and members start for Washington, and we publish the circular of instruction in regard to railroad transportation, etc., which may not have been received by letter by all delegates.

The June issue will be correspondingly late and will contain at least a partial report of the convention proceedings, which promise to be of an exceptionally interesting character.

IMPORTANT REPORTS

OUR Official Department should be read carefully. Space makes it impossible to comment on all the important events of the month.

